

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8838

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

USIA WASHDC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ID

SUBJ: DEBATE ON INDONESIAN MARRIANGE LAW CONTINUES

REF: JAKARTA 9996 JAKARTA 11080

SUMMARY: DEBATE OVER MARRIAGE BILL CONTINUED WITH FORMAL PRESENTATION OF PARTY AND GOLKAR POSITIONS IN PARLIAMENT ON SEPT 18-19. PREDICTABLY, GOKAR VOICED FULL SUPPORT, WHILE ARMED FORCES FRACTION URGED SPEEDY PASSAGE BUT HELD DOOR OPEN FOR SOME "IMPROVEMENT", AND ISLAMIC PARTY ATTACKED BILL FROM ALL ANGLES. DEBATE WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE AFTER FASTING MONTH HOLDIAY ENDS IN LATE OCTOBER OR EARLY NOVEMBER WHEN GOVERNMENT HOPES TO PUSH THROUGH SLIGHTLY MODIFIED BILL OVER MOSLEM OBJECTIONS IF NECESSARY. FOLLOWING BASED MAINLY PRESS ACCOUNTS. END SUMMARY

2. DABATE ON MARRIAGE BILL CONTINUED SEPT 18-29 WITH FULL-DRESS PRESENTATION OF OPINIONS BY FOUR
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PARLIAMENTARY FRACTIONS (GOVERNMENT PARTY GOLKAR,

ARMED FORCES AND TWO POLITICAL PARTIES) WITH MAIN THRUST OF ARGUMENTS AS FOLLOWS.

3. CARRYING FLAG FOR GOLKAR, MRS. ADAM MALIK URGED PASSAGE OF BILL WHICH SHE SAID FULFILLED LONG-ASPIRATIONS OF INDONESIAN WOMEN FOR PROTECTION OF THEIR BASIC RIGHTS. "TAME" GOLKAR MOSLEM NOTABLE KH KODRATULLAH FOLLOWED WITH ASSERTION THAT "LEGALIZATION" OF MARRIAGE UNDER PROPOSED LAW MEETS REQUIREMENTS OF STATE ONLY, AND DOES NOT PREVENT ANYONE FROM FURTHER FULFILLING REQUIREMENTS OF RELIGION. (COMMENT: THIS POINT WHICH IS 100 PERCENT VALID BUT WHICH HAS BEEN COMPLETELY IGNORED BY MOSLEMS WHO ARE REACTING EMOTIONALLY AGAINST BILL, COULD HAVE DEFUSED CONTROVERSY SOMEWHAT HAD IT BEEN MADE MUCH MORE FORCEFULLY AND EARLIER ON. END COMMENT.) KOTRADULLAH GRANTED THAT CERTAIN PARAGRAPHS OF BILL NEED FURTHER "EXPLANATION."

4. ARMED FORCES SPOKESMAN SAID BILL NEED TO BE IMPROVED AND CLARIFIED IN SOME RESPECT (E.G., DEFINITION OF "MARRIAGE" NOT COMPLETELY CLEAR). HOWEVER HE EMPHASIZED NECESSITY OF NATIONAL MARRIAGE LAW; URGED THAT DIFFERENCES OVER CURRENT BILL BE RESOLVED THROUGH CONSULTATION AND DISCUSSION, AND SAID THAT BILL SHOULD BE PASSED IN "NOT TOO LONG" A TIME.

5. DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NATIONALIST-CHRISTIAN) SPOKESMAN ALSO URGED PASSAGE OF COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL LAW (WHICH IS FUNDAMENTALLY OBJECTIONABLE TO MOSLEMS) BUT DEVOTED MOST TIME TO INCONCLUSIVE DISCUSSION OF NEED TO OBSERVE VARYING CUSTOMS, RELIGIONS, ETC. HE URGED GOVERNMENT TO DO MORE "LOBBYING" AMONG ISLAMIC LEADERS.

6. ISLAMIC PARTY PREDICTABLY ATTACKED BILL FROM ALL POINTS OF COMPASS, BUT IN CONSIDERABLY LESS VIRULENT TONES THAN SOME ISLAMIC LEADERS OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT. IN ADDITION TO REPEATED CLAIMS THAT MANY PARAGRAPHS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF BILL ARE IN CONFLICT WITH ISLAMIC LAW, SPEAKERS BORE DOWN HEAVILY ON THEME THAT CONSERVATIVE ISLAMIC SOCIETY (WHICH THEY SAY ENCOMPASSES MAJORITY OF INDONESIAN POPULATION) IS SIMPLY NOT PREPARED FOR SUCH A LAW, WHICH WOULD THUS BE UNENFORCEABLE. IN TYPICAL DISPLAY OF NON-SEQUITUR REASONING, ONE SPEAKER ASSERTED THAT SEVERE RESTRICTIONS ON POLYGAMY IN BILL WOULD ENCOURAGE ILLICIT SEX, WHILE ANOTHER

ATTACKED BILL BECAUSE IT DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY LIMIT
NUMBER OF WIVES TO FOUR, AS PER THE KORAN.

7. ACCORDING PRESS, A NUMBER
OF DEMONSTRATORS
BELONGING TO AD HOC ISLAMIC STUDENT GROUPS (E.G.,
GENERASI MUDA ISLAXX- "ISLAMIC YOUNGER GENERATION")
HAVE BEEN PICKED UP FOR INTERROGATION, INCLUDING
EIGHT IN BANDUNG ON SEPT 18. MOST IF NOT ALL ALREADY
RELEASED.

8. COMMENT: ACCORDING GOLKAR SOURCE, GOVERNMENT
HOPES TO LET BILL COOL OVER FASTING MONTH RECESS OF
PARLIAMENT. DEBATE WILL BE RESUMED IN LATE OCTOBER
OR EARLY NOVEMBER AND BILL PUSHED THROUGH TO PASSAGE
WITH SOME COMPROMISE LANGUAGE ADDED. HOPE IS THAT
MOSLEM RESISTANCE WILL HAVE SOFTENED BY THEN. BASIC
PROBLEM REMAINS THAT DEEP DOWN INSIDE, BOTH SIDES SEE
THIS AS CONTINUATION OF AN ANCIENT, TENSION-LADEN

POLITICAL DEBATE OVER WHETHER THE INDONESIAN POLITY
SHOULD REQUIRE MOSLEMS TO PRACTICE ISLAMIC LAW (THE
SO-CALLED "ISLAMIC STATE" CONCEPT) AS ACTIVIST MOSLEMS
HAVE ALWAYS DESIRED. THEIR TRADITIONAL OPPONENTS,
NOMINAL ABANGAN JAVANESE PLUS CHRISTIANS AND OTHER
NON-MOSLEMS, WHO DOMINATE POWER STRUCTURE AND HAVE
POWERFUL SUPPORT FROM WOMEN ON THIS ISSUE, SEE IT AS
AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE FOR ONCE AND ALL THAT
PANCASILA (THE STATE IDEOLOGY) MEANS "SEKULAR,"
PERIOD. FOR THEM THIS IS ANOTHER WAY OF DEMONSTRATING
THAT ISLAM WILL NEVER ACHIEVE POLITICAL POWER IN
INDONESIA. AS WE HAVE NOTED BEFORE, THEY MAY BE
OVERDOING IT. END COMMENT.
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